



ICTV Newsletter #11 (2013)

The “ICTV Newsletter” is designed to inform all interested in the work of the International Committee on Taxonomy of Viruses (ICTV) about recent developments and involve them more directly in taxonomic deliberations. A member of the ICTV Executive Committee (EC) prepares and sends the Newsletter to all those who have joined the ICTV discussion site at ICTVonline.org. Readers are responsible for keeping their contact information up-to-date. If you are a National Representative, make sure all the appropriate information is included on the web site, and send a note to the ICTV Secretary [Mike Adams](#). To register, navigate to <http://talk.ictvonline.org/> and click on “Join” in the upper right-hand corner of the page, near the “Search” box. Registration is automatic. Once registered, sign in using the name and password you provided. You can update your contact information by clicking on “Edit Profile” in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Please distribute this Newsletter freely. Comments and suggestions regarding the Newsletter are welcome. Previous Newsletters could be found [here](#).

Executive Committee activities:

The annual EC meeting, the 45th (EC45), was held July 15-17 2013 in Edinburgh, Scotland and was hosted by Peter Simmonds and Andrew J. Davison. This was the second meeting of the EC elected at the ICTV plenary meeting in Sapporo, September 2011. All but two of the [EC members](#) attended the 2½ days meeting. The agenda included processing of taxonomic proposals; discussion of issues related to taxonomy of viruses identified by (meta)genomics; EC management; continuing development of the ICTV website; the challenges of updating the ICTV 9th Report, as well as notifying the community about approved changes to taxonomy; and preparation for the election of the new EC during the XVIth International Congress of Virology in Montreal, Canada in 2014 (see below). Before the ICTV plenary session, the 46th EC meeting will be held July 24-26, 2014 in Kingston, Canada, hosted by Eric Carstens.

Recent progress with taxonomic proposals:

Ratification of previous proposals

All proposals approved by the EC need to be ratified by the entire voting membership of ICTV. This includes National Representatives, members of the subcommittees (mostly Study Group chairs) and Life Members. A large number of taxonomic proposals were ratified in an e-vote in February 2013. The EC was pleased to note that the recently introduced changes to the processing of taxonomic proposals (a fast-track approval of good quality proposals; for details see [ICTV Newsletter #10](#)) have achieved their goals: there has been a considerable shortening of the processing time for a large number of proposals and a larger volume of proposals has been processed. An article reporting the approved taxonomic changes has been published in the Virology Division News section of Archives of Virology [[Adams et al.](#),

[2013a](#)]. These are the second wave of changes to the taxonomy after the publication of the ICTV 9th Report; for summary of the first changes see [[Adams and Carstens, 2012](#)]. Also two other VDN articles were published that detail the approved changes to the Statutes [[Adams et al., 2014](#)], and the changes to the Taxonomic Code [[Adams et al., 2013b](#)]. The EC discussed at length how to improve dissemination of news about the current state of virus taxonomy and to acknowledge the efforts of all who contribute to changes. It was agreed that the format of future VDN articles on ratification votes will be modified to help meet these goals.

Taxonomic proposals under consideration

Taxonomic proposals approved at the EC45 meeting and through subsequent fast-track approval are expected to be sent to the ICTV membership via e-mail for ratification in February 2014. The proposals include the creation of several new families including *Amalgaviridae*, *Nyamiviridae*, *Spiraviridae* and *Turriviridae* and extensive changes to several families including *Adenoviridae*, *Geminiviridae*, *Papillomaviridae*, *Parvoviridae*, *Partitiviridae* and *Picornaviridae*. These as well as other proposals that have been recently submitted or revised, and which will be discussed (or re-considered) at EC46 in Kingston, can be examined online [here](#).

Taxonomic proposals based on metagenomic and genome-only studies

EC has long been concerned with addressing the taxonomic status of viruses that emerge from (meta)-genomic studies. While searching for a systematic solution to this important problem, the EC has agreed to accept species proposals based only on sequence data with certain safeguards. These include evidence that the sequences are effectively complete, that correct assembly has been verified and that the sequence is indeed viral in origin. Sequences would have to be analysed to provide evidence of taxonomic placement that did not exclusively rely on a simple measure of genetic difference. Also, the EC encourages Study Groups to submit proposals that would make a convincing case for recognizing taxa of any rank on a genome-only basis.

ICTV publications:

ICTV Ninth Report and its updates

Since the release of the [ICTV Ninth Report](#), virus taxonomy has been updated several times (see above). A summary of the latest ICTV-authorized taxonomy can always be found at <http://www.ictvonline.org/> where it can be consulted online or downloaded as a spreadsheet ([the Master Species List](#)).

Virology Division News (VDN)

The VDN section of Archives of Virology is an important vehicle to communicate ICTV news to the virology community and beyond. Please send reports and articles that deal with the development of virus taxonomy to [Jens Kuhn](#), Editor of VDN, indicating clearly whether they are (i) officially recognized by the ICTV, (ii) the subject of taxonomic proposals currently being considered by the ICTV, or (iii) informal suggestions for discussion.

History of taxonomic changes

The reconstructed history of all changes to ICTV-approved taxa (species, genera, subfamilies, families and orders) from the publication of the first report in 1971 is now [available](#). For the more recent changes, this information is linked to the proposal document(s) that resulted in those changes. This information provides a comprehensive record of the development of virus taxonomy by ICTV.

EC membership and elections, 2014

Most positions at the ICTV-EC will be open to election in 2014, and a number of the current Officers and Elected members need to be replaced in accordance with the Statutes. The EC is also proposing changes to the Statutes that will allow the appointment of a third Secretary to be specifically responsible for the web site and related data handling. The EC has nominated candidates for all the vacant positions; names and brief CVs will be placed on the [ictvonline web-site](#). Additional nominations should be submitted to [Mike Adams](#) in the accordance with Article 4 of the [ICTV statutes](#) up to 2 days before the elections. Elections will take place during the ICTV Plenary session at [ICV-XVI](#) (scheduled for 29 July 2014).

Study Group Chairs

Study Groups (SGs) are responsible for keeping up-to-date with the emergence of new viruses and proposing new species or higher taxa in their families by submitting taxonomic proposals to the appropriate Subcommittee Chairs. The current list of SGs along with Chairs can be accessed [here](#). Please send any changes to your contact information (e.g. mail address) to your SG Chair and to [Mike Adams](#).

Funding

ICTV is very grateful to the Virology Division of [the International Union of Microbiological Societies](#), [the Society of General Microbiology](#), and [the American Society of Virology](#) for their recent support.

Important links:

[Main Web site for ICTV](#)

[ICTV virus taxonomy database: current classification and history of each taxon since 2005](#)

[Templates for taxonomic proposals](#)

Problems, comments and questions

As always, comments and suggestions are welcome. To ensure efficient distribution of this and other information, we ask you to keep up-to-date your personal information online. If you are a National Representative, make sure all the appropriate information is included on the web site, and send a note to the ICTV Secretary, [Mike Adams](#).

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